

MASTER OF MONSTER MOTION!

Ray Harryhausen was born in Los Angeles in 1920.

His childhood was filled with visits to the Natural History Museum and the local tar pits in Hancock Park, all necessary to fuel his enthusiasm for dinosaurs! After seeing *King Kong* (1933), he read everything he could on movie special effects and, with a friend's 16mm camera, began experimenting with his own models. An opportune meeting with Willis O'Brien, who brought Kong to life so realistically for Ray, helped him on the road to professional work.

Whilst developing his own dream project, *Evolution* (1940), he worked on the George Pal's *Puppetoon* series and also animated his own *Mother Goose Stories* (1945). Hired as an assistant to Willis O'Brien, although not credited in the final movie, Ray got his big break on the *Mighty Joe Young* (1949) in which he carried out most of the special animation effects. His first solo feature assignment was *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), which is frequently compared to the recent blockbuster *Godzilla*. Using a split screen process, he developed the technique to insert a 3D model between a live action background and foreground without resorting to expensive miniatures or glass paintings. The film was a huge success and Ray's career was assured.

When *Clash of the Titans* was released in 1981, it marked the end of an era and Ray's long association with the producer, Charles Schneer, whom he met during World War II. They had released a huge range of successful fantasy and adventure movies, all showcasing the remarkable stop motion and Dynamation effects developed by Ray. Turning down the opportunity to work at George Lucas' Industrial Light & Magic for Schneer's next venture *Force of the Trojans*, Ray Harryhausen announced his retirement at the 1985 San Jose Film Festival.

Now a man of leisure, he is a popular lecturer in the SF genre convention circuit. Many of his movies are ingrained in our memory because they really were Fantastic cinema, bringing to life many of the myths & legends of our childhood. More and more of Ray's movies are being re-issued on video and fans everywhere are lapping them up.

ALBACON is delighted to introduce you to the man who wrecked New York, San Francisco and Long Beach. And the ancient city of Argos! Cool!

THE MOVIES OF RAY HARRYHAUSEN

The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms (1953)

Bomb wakes up the monster. Great stuff with the classic scene where it attacks a lighthouse.

It Came from Beneath the Sea (1955)

Giant octopus terrorises San Francisco and wrecks the Golden Gate Bridge.

Earth Versus the Flying Saucers (1956)

Early version of Independence Day! Aliens demonstrate the hazards of low flying and crash into the White House.

The Animal World (1957)

Semi-documentary directed by Irwin Allen, with Ray and Willis O'Brien doing the dinosaurs.

20 Million Miles to Earth (1957)

Egg from Venus hatches the Ymir. Ray got a cameo role in this movie as a zoo keeper!

The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad (1958)

Ray's first foray into the Sinbad stories, featuring the new Dynamation technique. This also got an X certificate in Britain – unbelievable!

Three Worlds of Gulliver (1959)

Kerwin Matthews gets all tied up in this less than successful rendition of the story of Gulliver.

Mysterious Island (1961)

Jules Verne's novel transformed for the screen with lots of animated beasts.

Jason and the Argonauts (1963)

Everyone's favourite and containing one of the most memorable fight sequences in a movie.

First Men on the Moon (1964)

Incredible lunar landscapes and watch for the great scene in the Grand Lunar!

One Million Years BC (1966)

Raquel Welch, in that bikini, stars in Hammer Studio's 100th movie.

The Valley of Gwangi (1968)

Dinosaurs in the Wild West. Much more fun than *Raw Hide*!

The Golden Voyage of Sinbad (1974)

Tom Baker stars as the evil magician battling with Sinbad to reach the Fountain of Youth. Best bit: the statue of Kali coming to life.

Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger (1977)

Patrick Wayne sails into adventure and comes face to face with a troglodyte, a giant walrus and a giant tiger. Watch out for Martin Shaw (*The Professionals*) as one of the crew.

Clash of the Titans (1981)

Big screen treatment about the Greek hero, Perseus. Although the story is slightly altered, it is still a good movie and the famous sequence with Medusa is brilliant.

7th September 1998

RODNEY MATTHEWS

My new television series **LAVENDER CASTLE** has just finished shooting and will be screened weekly on the ITV network starting in January. It is being distributed world wide by Warner Brothers.

Some years ago I met Rodney Matthews who was kind enough to show me some of his work. His superb craftsmanship and inimitable style immediately fired my imagination. With this quality of design, I thought, I could make a superb television series for children. The only problem was that his characters, at that time, were virtually impossible to animate in 3D. I asked him if he could produce designs which could be animated. We had a long discussion on the subject and then he started work. The wonderful characters he created were indeed animatable and with the aid of computer generated images and enhancement **Lavender Castle** commenced production. Designed by Rodney Matthews of course.

Some months ago I went to one of his exhibitions in Wales and I can only say that I was gob smacked when I saw the originals of some of his famous posters. No matter how good the prints of his work are they cannot capture the luminance of the originals

In terms of his concepts, draughtsmanship and detailed execution there is no one, in my opinion, who can claim to be his equal.

Finally Rodney is an extremely nice person as you will find out if you are lucky enough to talk to him! Have a great convention Rodney!

GERRY ANDERSON